



Blue Mounds Area Project

Conservation and Community. Together.

Winter 2021/2022

Volume 24 Number 3



In this issue:

■ 1
Sharing and Learning with
BMAP's Facebook Presence

■ 2
President's Message
Ecologist's Report: Crucial
Relationship Between Native
Plants and Invertebrates

■ 3
BMAP On Line
Two Ferns: A New, Local
Native Nursery

■ 4
In Memoriam: Tom Brock

■ 5
BMAP Work Parties
Thank You, Amy Alstad
Conservation Conversation
Winter Lectures

www.bluemounds.org

Sharing and Learning with BMAP's Facebook Presence

by Denise Thornton

Over the years, our members have come to value catching up on BMAP news and events through our summer property tours, winter lecture series, newsletters, and the monthly eBulletin. BMAP's Facebook presence is another great way to keep up with BMAP activities, get access to articles of interest, and even ask questions of other members; or share what has or hasn't worked in your restoration efforts.

Our expanding Facebook presence is easy to explore. You can find the addresses for both our Facebook page and our group at the top of page 3 of this newsletter, and are also listed on our website: bluemounds.org/connect.

Our Facebook page and group serve different purposes — both are well worth checking out. BMAP member, Brooke Lewis, is our volunteer Facebook manager, and she has been actively working to improve our Facebook options.

Brooke and her husband found their 32 acres north of Barneveld in 2014, and they have been restoring it since then. "It has a lot of rocky outcroppings and hills," she says. "We do have a little unplowed prairie sod and also woods, so it's a good mix."

Trying to find answers on how to restore their land, Brooke googled all the environmental organizations in the area. "I'm also a member of The Prairie Enthusiasts and Wild Ones Madison chapter, but I really liked BMAP's local focus," says Brooke.

Brooke spent a number of years as a wildlife rehabilitation specialist at the Dane County Humane Society where she ran their Facebook page, so when she called

**BMAP's Facebook group
can be a great place to go
to ask people you know and
trust for advice.**

cont. page 4, see FACEBOOK



Volunteer Brooke Lewis administers BMAP's Facebook presence.

Photo by Jan Lewis

President's Message

Doug Hansmann, BMAP President



Doug Hansmann

Seasons' greetings!

It's remarkable how many enriching opportunities BMAP has continued to offer to our community during these challenging times. Thanks to the efforts of staff

ecologist Micah Kloppenburg and a team of dedicated volunteers, this past year we held property tours, conducted site visits, and ran a spectacular Natural Communities Class taught by an expert team from the Botanical Club of

Wisconsin (see the fall 2021 newsletter for a full report on the class).

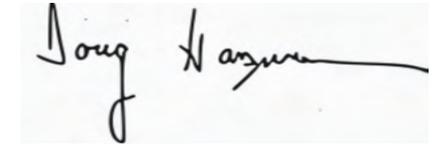
And we have another great year in the works! BMAP 2022 will start off in January, with our annual winter Conservation Conversation lecture series (see the line up on page 5). Then, stay tuned for news about another new class, and property tours, TBA. New in 2022, we are hoping to launch a "walk with a naturalist" series, as well as establish a message board for coordinating volunteer work parties on member property projects (see the article on page 5).

The board is seeking to increase membership to help support these expanded activities. Starting with the Conversations, we're promoting a 'bring a friend' campaign, encouraging members to invite

an interested non-member to our events, which we hope will inspire others to join our ranks.

On a personal note, I'll be passing the baton on board leadership soon. It's been an honor and privilege to help guide last year's membership survey process and rejuvenate BMAP's working committees. Thanks so much to the several volunteers who have stepped into active new roles. The credit for our progress and success is theirs.

Wishing you all the best over the holidays and into the new year.



Ecologist's Report

Micah Kloppenburg, BMAP Ecologist



Micah Kloppenburg

During 2021, BMAP members and I have walked 18 properties and talked through restoration priorities and practices on more than 850 acres. I also conducted two working plant inventories on

member properties (email me to learn more on this service) detailing more than 150 prairie and savanna species at one exceptional site.

I published and shared ecological anecdotes and information through eight BMAP eBulletins; I authored three articles for our BMAP Newsletter: introducing the new Natural Communities Class, detailing restoration research on goat browse, and reviewing recent perspectives on the important relationship of native plants and

invertebrates (see below). I also developed a partnership with the Botanical Club of WI to support the inaugural rollout of the Natural Communities Class for BMAP membership.

I'd like to especially thank all members who have donated to the Ecologist program, your generous contributions support site visits for our growing membership of BMAP land stewards.

The questions, priorities, and values that BMAP members share with me during my site visits and landowner tours inspire me to be more thorough — expanding the site visit report management recommendations, adding specificity to each restoration practice by detailing prerequisite steps and presenting exact directives: especially around herbicide applications, mowing regimes, and brush clearing protocols.



The Crucial Relationship Between Native Plants and Invertebrates

This year, I have turned my attention to the hidden world of invertebrates.

As a restoration practitioner, I have assumed that native plant communities provide habitat for a wealth of invertebrate species. This assumption justified my recommendations of fire for habitat management that sustain the structure and composition of our plant communities. After reading, listening, and reflecting on recent research outlining invertebrate response to fire, I'm now better informed on how prescribed fire can holistically support healthy native habitat — plants and pollinators, all.

Insect abundance is declining by about 2% each year (while some species are thriving, their success is masked by the erasure of other species).⁸ The reasons for this

cont. page 3, see ECOLOGIST

■ BMAP ON LINE ■

Our website: bluemounds.org

BMAP's monthly eBulletin for announcements, habitat restoration tips, and more:

bluemounds.org/ebulletin.html

BMAP's Facebook page for events and environmental news:

facebook.com/BMAPcommunity

BMAP's Facebook group for sharing photos, ideas, and activities:

facebook.com/groups/BMAPcommunity

ECOLOGIST *from page 2*

decline are extremely complex, but largely a consequence of our human agency in transforming the natural world.

Research shows that native plant communities are critical to sustaining invertebrate populations. Most importantly, specific species are vital for specific invertebrates!

To assess a plant's value for invertebrates, includes whether a plant is native to a given area. Non-native species and congeners from other eco-regions are simply not eaten by local invertebrates; they support many fewer species, lower abundance, and overall less biomass in invertebrate life.^{5,7}

Invertebrates co-evolved alongside woody and herbaceous plants, adapting to their phytochemistry, morphology, and phenology.⁵ This steady interaction likely describes why 90% of plant-eating inverts are specialists to a specific species (or to a set of species within a genus), and why 30% of native bees are pollen specialists.^{1,2} One study I reviewed found that just 14% of native plant species in a given habitat support nearly 90% of Lepidoptera species⁵ — a surprising statistic that infers that there

cont. page 6, see ECOLOGIST

Two Ferns: A New, Local Native Nursery

by Denise Thornton



Athena Salzer and Amy Jo Dusick in front of their hoop house

Photo courtesy of Two Ferns Native Nursery

There's a new kid on the block to add to our prairie resource list. Two Ferns Native Nursery, founded by Amy Jo Dusick and Athena Salzer, has just completed its third season. They are starting small and operating from a hoop house on the northeast side of Madison.

Athena got her degree in forestry and ecosystem restoration from UW-Stevens Point and started working for Good Oak Ecological Services straight out of college. Amy Jo trained in restoration ecology and soils at UW-Madison in the Landscape Architecture Department and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, then teamed up with Athena when she also began working at Good Oak.

"I've known since I was young that I wanted to have a greenhouse," says Athena. "We had a nursery in my family, and as my interest evolved into sustainability and restoration, everything fell together. Amy Jo and I met, and we began working towards growing plants for restoration."

They are starting with plants they learned were in demand through their restoration work — a combination of woodland, prairie, and rain garden plants, focusing on choices that will work for a wide range of projects. As they grow, they plan to add plants that are harder to find.

In spring 2021, Two Ferns partnered with the UW-Arboretum to grow and assemble butterfly and hummingbird kits.

Two Ferns partnered with the UW-Arboretum in spring 2021 to grow and assemble their Journey North Monarch butterfly kits and hummingbird kits for the Arboretum Native Plant Sale. They also collaborate with the local Madison Wild Ones Chapter on their Milkweed for Monarchs Program, and last summer, helped with the Wingra School rain garden project.

cont. page 6, see TWO FERNS

FACEBOOK *from page 1*

Amy Alstad, who was BMAP president at the time, to see where her skills could fit into BMAP, Amy suggested she plug in with John and Julie Raasch, who had established our Facebook presence. With their help, Brooke has taken over administering the site.

“Our main page, [facebook.com/BMAPcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/BMAPcommunity) is open to everyone,” says Brooke. It has an educational component, as well as upcoming events and activities.

Brooke scans online material from other environmental organizations, and shares articles BMAP members might find useful here.

If you’re looking for a place to ask and answer questions in dialog with other members, our BMAP group, [Facebook.com/groups/BMAPcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMAPcommunity), is a great place to check out.

“Having a group for questions like this can be really valuable, and the more people who join and use our group, the more useful it will

be,” says Brooke.

The pandemic has made it challenging to maintain our sense of restoration fellowship, but our Facebook group is an opportunity to ask and answer each other’s questions and keep our sense of community strong.

“I’m excited to be a part of BMAP’s Facebook presence,” Brooke says. “I’ve met many great people who care about natural communities.”

“Even if you don’t have a question, you can post photos of what’s happening on your land. It doesn’t have to be ‘What is this plant?’ It might be ‘Check out this beautiful flower!’ There is a lot of opportunity to ask specific questions and talk about practical aspects of restoration. It could be a great place to go to ask people you know and trust for advice.”

BMAP is a community of people sharing what they have learned about taking care of their land. What better way to exchange information than through something as fluid and current as our Facebook presences?

Even though Facebook has a bad image in some circles, we can make our presence what we want it to be — a great way to learn about land restoration.

Brooke also wants BMAP members to know that it is important not just to look at our Facebook page and group, but to like them, comment, and share them with friends when you find them useful.

“The Facebook algorithms send our page to more people when we take the time to like, comment, and share. If your goal is to spread the word and build BMAP, this is a good way to do that.”

Please take a moment to check our Facebook presence out. You may like what you see. Plugging into BMAP’s Facebook page and group can expand your horizons and help both you and others.

In Memoriam



BMAP lost a widely admired and respected member this year when Dr. Thomas Brock died at his home in April. Tom authored hundreds of research papers and wrote or edited over 20 books, and is known to the world as an honored and awarded microbiologist whose all-encompassing curiosity, academic rigor, and drive opened new fields of research that led, among other topics, to the ability to amplify DNA segments, which was integral to the field of DNA analysis, and is a key process in lab-based coronavirus testing.

Tom was known to our BMAP membership as an inspiring and supportive restoration researcher for his work with his wife Kathie on their 140-acre property near Black Earth which they transformed from an abandoned farm to The Pleasant Valley Conservancy — now designated as a State Natural Area, protecting it as an outstanding example of Wisconsin’s native landscape. As his daughter Emily said, “Pleasant Valley’s host of rare prairie and savanna plants, and its robust population of open grown bur oaks, serve as a lasting monument to Tom Brock’s endless energy, inventiveness, enthusiasm, and dedication to the natural world.”

BMAP Work Parties

by Tom Broman

How many times have you spent sweaty hours hacking away at buckthorn and honeysuckle, or confronted a sea of prickly ash or blackberry canes, and wished that you had some extra pairs of hands to help you make faster progress with your labors? BMAP's new work party plan may be just what you need.

The idea for creating work parties took shape last summer during the four-session outdoor Natural Communities of Southwestern Wisconsin class that BMAP and the Botanical Club of Wisconsin co-sponsored. A few of us began talking about this idea as a potentially fun way of sharing the effort of repetitive and not very difficult or technical tasks like cutting and treating shrubby invasives, pulling garlic mustard, and so forth.

The benefits of having two- to three-hour work parties, could be both social and practical. On the social side of the ledger, work parties invite us to get to know each other better and perhaps share a drink or snack before/after/during the work. The potential practical benefits speak for themselves.

Work party logistics and communications for 2022 are still being finalized. If you are interested in learning more, participating in, or hosting a BMAP volunteer work party, please email Tom Broman, thbroman@hotmail.com, to receive updates.

Look for more information as it becomes available in the spring BMAP newsletter, upcoming bluemounds.org/ebulletin.html and BMAP's Facebook page. The work party should provide opportunities to have some fun meeting and getting to know other BMAP members a little better while helping each other with the work that we are all committed to.

Thank You, Amy Alstad

by Carroll Schaal

The BMAP Board would like to extend our thanks to Amy Alstad for her dedication and many contributions to BMAP. Amy began her time with BMAP as Ecologist in 2015, and her expertise helped improve and document our site visit procedures and landowner reports. She worked with Director, Paul Kaarakka to upgrade our site visit and membership databases.

Amy transitioned to the Board of Directors in 2017, and for a while remained our Ecologist. For two years Amy served as board president. With a steady hand she led us through strategic planning, a significant website upgrade, and the debut of the BMAP eBulletin. As Amy moved us forward it was always apparent that she believed in the BMAP mission of promoting conservation by private land owners.

Thanks Amy!

■ Conservation Conversation Winter Lectures ■

This winter's talks will be streamed live from the Mount Horeb Senior Center, 107 N Grove Street. In-person attendees will be required to follow existing masking and distancing protocols. If tuning in on line, you'll still be able to participate in the Q&A. Please go to www.bluemounds.org/events for log in details.

Attracting Eastern Bluebirds & Other Cavity Nesters

Patrick Ready

7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 20, 2022

Bluebird habitat, nest boxes, and how to place and monitor them. Cavity nesters like chickadees, tree swallows, and house wrens and other challenges will also be covered. Patrick Ready managed the bluebird trail at Lake Kegonsa State Park, and now manages nine trails in Dane County, fledging over 1000 bluebirds from his trails. On the board of Bluebird Restoration Association of Wis. (BRAW), Ready edits their newsletter, *Wisconsin Bluebird*.

A Journey from Abandoned Farm to Premier State Natural Area

Kathie Brock

7:00 Thursday, February 3, 2022

Kathie Brock will detail how she and her husband, Tom, transformed a degraded remnant south of Black Earth into the acclaimed State Natural Area, The Pleasant Valley Conservancy over the past 25 years — a sterling example of restored oak savannas, dry, mesic and wet prairies, wetlands, and oak woods. "It now looks something like it did before European settlement," says Brock. Inspiration for us all!

Reading the Driftless

Curt Meine and Keefe Keeley

7:00 p.m. Thursday, February 17, 2022

Curt Meine and Keefe Keely, editors of *The Driftless Reader* — a survey of writings and images of the natural and cultural history of the Driftless Area — will discuss the development of their book, share readings, and reflect on how diverse voices of the Driftless help us understand its past, present and future. Meine is a Senior Fellow at the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Research Associate at the International Crane Foundation, and Adjunct Associate Professor at the UW-Madison. Keely is co-executive director at the Savanna Institute.

ECOLOGIST *from page 3*

are a wealth of native plants that are simply not a forage source for many invertebrates.

I still firmly believe that fire is predicate for successful southern Wisconsin habitat management, however that belief is now better informed by science. Recent research suggests that prescribed fires (primarily their timing and intensity) have varying effects on the invertebrates that call these wildlands home. In particular, springtails, aphids, plant hoppers, parasitoid wasps, and spiders are intolerant to spring fires.³

In contrast, sites that have been recently burned are more attractive to pollinators (bumblebees in particular) and may even sustain an increase in bee abundance and richness,⁴ likely because vegetation can respond to fire with a greater floral abundance and a longer blooming period.⁴ Invertebrate tolerance to fire is linked to

species' life histories, with nesting location (below ground vs. above ground) and mobility determining a population's resilience to fire and its ability to recolonize a burned site.

90% of inverts are plant-eating specialists to a specific species or group of species, and 30% of bees are pollen specialists.

From this review and reflection, I offer the following two suggestions for habitat management as part of the knowledge base land stewards can consider to protect Wisconsin's native plant communities.

1) Include a subset of woody and herbaceous species that are known to support a wealth of invertebrates, both herbivores and pollinators, in your larger plantings and/or habitat management plans. Note: Do not design restorations around a specific suite of plant species known to best support specific invertebrates. That would be a reductionist approach — simplifying community complexity to a single, priority that we think we understand. Remember that forage quality is only one component of many that together supports the ebb and flow of an ecosystem's dynamic equilibrium.

2) When planning prescribed fires, if possible, leave 1/3 of a given habitat area unburned for invertebrate refugia, varying the location of your refugia each year as well as your burn timing and frequency. If you are concerned about woody growth in areas with a reduced or changed fire frequency, consider implementing targeted mechanical removal of encroaching brush (cut or cut-and-treat).

You can find the references for this article on the last page of the online edition of the newsletter.

TWO FERNS *from page 3*

“There were challenges these past two summers,” says Athena, “but gardening was wildly popular with people home and more active in their landscape. The challenge was how to sell plants safely during a pandemic. We set up appointments when people could reserve an hour in our 20x40-ft hoop house and use curbside pickup.”

They are working on their 2022 list right now. After stratifying seeds in the fridge in bags of sand, and in some cases moist paper towels for the smallest seeds, they are experimenting with outdoor stratification.

“The idea of winter sowing provides the natural freeze/thaw variations that some seeds may prefer,” says Amy Jo. An easy way to start seedlings outside that can be transplanted later is to use a gallon milk jug. To learn more on this technique, check out <https://monarchbutterflygarden.net/winter-sowing-milkweed-seeds-prepare-containers/>.

“We like to work with land owners who are doing the work themselves.”

“You can start seedlings any time,” says Amy Jo, “But many plants only require 30-60 days stratification, so people have till January to get seeds stratifying.” She finds this Prairie Moon link to be a great resource for learning stratification requirements for various species. <https://www.prairiemoon.com/blog/learning-center>.

For beginners, Amy Jo recommends starting with less than 10 species. Some seeds that are easy to start include any of the asters, members of the mint family, and milkweed. For city dwellers creating a “yoga mat” prairie in their yards, she recommends butterfly

cont. page 7, see TWO FERNS

Breunig CPA, LLC



**John Bird
and
Barb Parrell**

608-767-3722 / Phone
888-767-4142 / Toll Free
johnfbird@tds.net

www.johnfbirdacct.com

1116 Mills Street · P.O. Box 416
Black Earth, WI 53515-0416

TWO FERNS from page 6

weed, which is an elegant orange color and easy to grow. She also recommends 10 - 20% grasses like little bluestem and prairie dropseed or sideoats grama, which add texture and matrix to the planting to keep taller plants standing up.

“No prairie plot is too small. They can go a long way to balancing the biodiversity,” she continues. “Just keep planting!”



Two Ferns also likes to work in the larger context of prairie restoration. “We like to work with land owners who are doing the work themselves,” says Athena. “There

is so much information to sift through, and we are here to help.”

Because their hoop house isn’t open to the public for regular retail hours yet, the best way to reach Two Ferns is by email at twofernsmadison@gmail.com. To learn more about this great new native plant nursery, check out their website at <http://www.twofernsmadison.com/>.

Our Mission:

The Blue Mounds Area Project is a community-based organization that seeks to inspire, inform, and empower private landowners in the southwestern Wisconsin region to enjoy, protect, and restore native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Our Objectives:

- 1) Promote understanding, appreciation and conservation of native woodlands, prairies, wetlands and savannas and their special species in an economically viable manner, through community outreach programs and private contacts.
- 2) Act as a clearing house for information from people and organizations involved in preserving native biodiversity including information about plant, animal and habitat identification, management, restoration, seed sources, native plant nurseries and invasive, nonnative species.
- 3) Encourage cooperative volunteer restoration and management activities.
- 4) Identify public and private land use changes that may affect ecosystem health and promote community-based stewardship of the unique natural heritage of the Blue Mounds and the southwestern region of Wisconsin.

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published three times yearly. We welcome your comments, submissions, and advertisements.

Newsletter editor: Denise Thornton. Drawings by Denise Thornton.

BMAP Board of Directors

- Doug Hansmann, President
- Greg Jones, Vice President
- Carroll Schaal, Treasurer
- Bill Sonzogni, Secretary
- Amy Alstad
- Jim Bennett
- Steve Gauger
- Linda Millunzi-Jones

Micah Kloppenburg, Ecologist
ecologist@bluemounds.org

Interested in volunteering with the Blue Mounds Area Project? Contact us at:
info@bluemounds.org
608-571-4501

Blue Mounds Area Project Membership Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Status:

Renewal New Member Gift Membership for: _____

Membership Level:

Basic \$40 Contributor \$70 Supporter \$100 Lifetime \$1000

Additional donation beyond your annual membership: _____ TOTAL MEMBERSHIP / DONATION: _____

Make checks payable and return to: Blue Mounds Area Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572
or you can contribute online at <https://www.bluemounds.org/donor-form>

Yes, I would like to receive information about site visits.

Thank you! Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



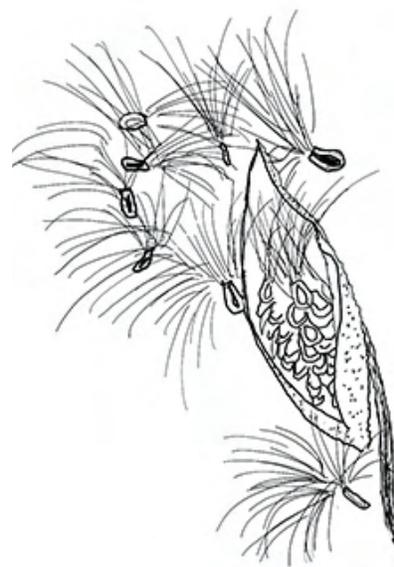
Blue Mounds Area Project

P.O. Box 332

Mt. Horeb, WI 53572

Blue Mounds Area Project Winter 2021/2022 Newsletter

A December snow
blankets fallen prairie seeds
prompting dreams of spring.
- haiku by Doug Hansmann



www.bluemounds.org

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?

BMAP maintains a calendar year membership cycle. If you are receiving a complimentary copy of the newsletter, please consider becoming a member.

References to Micah Kloppenburg's Ecologist's Report on 'The Crucial Relationship Between Native Plants and Invertebrates':

1. Forister, M.L., V. Novotny, A.K. Panorska, L. Baje, Y. Basset, P.T. Butterill, L. Cizek, P.D. Coley, F. Dem, I.R. Diniz, P. Drozd, M. Fox, A.E. Glassmire, R. Hazen, J. Hrcek, J.P. Jahner, O. Kaman, et al. 2015. "Global Insect Herbivore Diet Breadth." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 112(2), p. 442-447.
2. Fowler, J. 2020. "Pollen Specialist Bees of the Central United States." https://jarrodfowler.com/bees_pollen.html
3. Harper, M.G., C.H. Dietrich, R.L. Larimore, and P.A. Tessene. 2000. "Effects Of Prescribed Fire On Prairie Arthropods: An Enclosure Study." *Natural Areas Journal*, Vol. 20(4), p. 325-335.
4. Mola, J. M., and N. M. Williams. 2018. "Fire-induced change in floral abundance, density, and phenology benefits bumble bee foragers." *Ecosphere*, Vol. 9(1).
5. Narango, D.L., D.W. Tallamy, and K.J. Shropshire. 2020. "Few Keystone Plant Genera Support The Majority Of Lepidoptera Species." *Nature Communications*, Vol. 11.
6. Richards, L.A., L.A. Dyer, M.L. Forister, A.M. Smilanich, C.D. Dodson, M.D. Leonard, and C.S. Jeffrey. 2015. "Phytochemical Diversity and Insect Community." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 112(35), p. 10973 – 10978
7. Richard, M., D.W. Tallamy, and A.B. Mitchell. 2019. "Introduced Plants Reduce Species Interactions." *Biological Invasions*, Vol. 21, p. 983–992.
8. Wagner, D.L., E.M. Grames, M.L. Forister, M.R. Berenbaum, and D. Stopack. "Insect Decline In The Anthropocene: Death By A Thousand Cuts." 2021. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 118(2).